

THE Little Review;

OR, AN

Inquisition of Scandal;

Consisting in *Answers of Questions and Doubts,
Remarks, Observation and Reflection.*

Wednesday, July 4. 1705.

THE Society think themselves not Answerable for the Impertinence of the Letters sent, only think themselves oblig'd to take care their Answers are suitable.

The following Letter writ in the first Person of *Bélinda*, but the Answer directed to *Policarpus* at a Wine-Cellar; contains some odd Passages that seem diverting, but have something in them that seem to give a Character which suits too many of both Sexes, and which seems to make too many Unhappy Marriages, viz. Reserving a Sovereignty to our own Humour.

Gentlemen,

I Am a young Gentlewoman, about the Age of — the only remains of an Ancient and Honourable Family, in the County of — well Educated from my Infancy; but the Misery is, my Parents left me little or nothing to Support this Frail Body of mine; and to appear in the World according to my Birth: I own 'tis a great Misfortune, and do bear it with a Christian Patience; but what is a farther addition to my Unhappiness, is the uneasiness of my Temper, which makes me

Fret the very Skin off my Body. I would fain be Married, but 'tis in vain to think on't; for as the Times go, Money is the Business, and I am not much troubled with that Ckarm: However, I have other Qualifications to Answer that defect, which I wou'd have some good Man consider of. I Promise, whosoever he is, to be to him an Obedient Wife, (reserving to my self, upon some special occasions, to have my own Humour) for I have an old English Proverb on my side, viz. That which is bred in the Bone, will never out of the Flesh. Therefore, pray Gentlemen, give me your Opinion, whether if some Honest Man should fancy to Marry me (who is able to Maintain me, so that I may not want the Necessaries of this Life) that my Temper would not be alter'd, and I become as Happy as any of my Sex, in the most Honourable State of Matrimony, for I can live without being Wed, having so much — per Ann. for my Subsistence.

Sir, This is my Case, and wish I could have writ it in fewer words; I leave the whole to your consideration, and beg you will give an Answer in your next Review, and I shall never forget to return the Obligation.

H

Bélinda.
Really

Really, Madam, there are so many Contradictions in your Letter, That as to your Particular Case, the Society can say Little, sometimes you would fain be Married, sometimes can live without being Wed.

Sometimes you have little or nothing to support you, sometimes you have so much *per Ann.* to live on.

Sometimes you have a Frail Body; again you can make a very good Wife.

As these Contradictions are very hard to be put together, to is this main Paradox, how you can talk of making a good Wife with a reserve to your own Humour.

This reserve of Humour has a vast Latitude it it, and may be which Child of all the Publick Mischiefs with Ruine Families, destroy Husbands, and expose the very State of a Married Life. *For Example.*

Suppose, Madam, you had the Man you desire, let it be who it will, and this Temper or Humour of yours enclin'd you to be over free with this Mr. *Polydorp* at the Wine-Cellar, or any other Inhabitants of those *English Sodoms*, that you thought fit. Your Husband finding you in this Excess, shows his resentment; and you, in your Defence, bring out your Marriage Articles, of which this is one of the Stipulations, that you reserv'd the Exercise of your own Temper——So the Gentleman must put all these things up, and not be Angry.

As to your self, Madam, they cannot persuade you to Marry, nor any Man to meddle with you, till you can resolve to make no reserves that may bear you out in Embroiling your Family, and ruining a good Husband.

Upon the whole, they concluded on the following Heads.

1. Reserves in the Case of Marriages, are like Mental Reservations in Oaths, the inlet to all manner of Mischiefs.

2. They are not fit either for Husbands or Wives, who do not resolve beforehand to disband all Humours and ill Tempers, and Sacrifice every Inclination to their Family Peace.

3. The Special Interest of all such who attempt Matrimony, is to Study each others Humours, and to endeavour so to match their Tempers, that the Marriage may Unite their Souls as well as Bodies.

Society thought proper to joyn them to the two other following Queries.

HOW may we convince the Heathens that ours is the True God, and not theirs?

2. Was the Burning of Sodom and Gomorrah by Natural, or Supernatural Causes?

3. Has the Law of God or Man the greater Effect in Converting Men from Sin?

To the first, The Querist is supposed not to mean the Ancient Roman Heathens, and their set of Gods, his own Reason will inform him they cannot be truly so; who by their own Worshippers are said to commit so many enormities as they are; and besides, he asks how may we Convince them. Now there he intimates some now alive which are to be Convinc'd, and there excludes the Ancient Heathens: Therefore, if he pleases to name who he means, and what Gods they Worship, he shall receive a full Answer as to the Truth of them.

To the Second we say, That *Sodom and Gomorrah* were burnt by a Supernatural Cause working on Natural ones, and thus we deliver our selves, That the Earth in that Part being particularly full of Sulphurous and Bituminous Matters, the Exhalations partaking of the same, being in a greater Quantity than usual gathered together in the Air, and fir'd by their own Motion, are directed by Divine Providence to fall. (that we allow supernatural upon those Clities) Thus any Comet, or *Blazing-Star*, should a Supernatural Impulse force it down upon *London*, or any City in the World, would have the same Effect. Others are of Opinion, that the Foundation of that part of the Earth was very Bituminous, Pitchy, and full of Combustible Matter, so Order'd by Divine Justice, which, for the Punishment of their Sins, first set Fire to this Matter. Suppose it to have been by Lightning, or any other more immediate act of God, (for *Solinus* calls it *Calo tacta tellus*) now this Supernatural touch working upon the Natural Cause of so much Fire, (*i. e.* the Collection of Bitumen) 'tis easy to suppose, that these Citys might quickly be burnt. Historians say, That where those Places were, Rocks do now Distil such Sulphurous Matter and the Ground sends forth such Flames that it scorches the Air, that no People can Inhabit nigh it; and that on the same Ground, stand Fruit-Trees of exceeding fine Colour, but being touch'd, moulder into Ashes.

A Farther Answer being promised to the Querist, about the Heathen Gods, the

Affes. Most People attribute the same Cause to Mount *Vesuvius* and *Atna*, as to the Burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*.

To the third Query, we say, That the Laws of Men Convert most; Men are divided into Good and Bad, the Bad are most Numerous, these not mindful of the Divine Laws (else they are not Bad) do avoid Sin only upon the Account of Human Laws, because they are Penal, and that immediately after Sin Committed, whereas Divine Punishment being reserv'd for Futurity, does not affect them, because afar off. So that Divine Laws work only on good Men.

A Bundance of Gentlemen, who not knowing very well how to manage one Wife, yet think hard they cannot have two or three, or perhaps with *Solomon*, two or three Hundred, are frequently sending us Questions about the Lawfulness of it; and we doubt not, he that form'd it into the following Queries, thought he had Clench't it down beyond the possibility of an Answer.

June 20. 1705.

Gentlemen,

THe generosity and Candor, with which you treat Infortunate Querists, imboldens me to beg the Solution of the following Queries, as soon as conveniently you can.

1. Whether what was once a Sin, will not always be so?

2. Whether what was not a Sin once, can be one now?

3. Whether, *Jacob*, *David*, *Solomon*, &c. Sin'd in having more than one Wife?

4. Whether (if it were not against the Law of the Nation) it would be a Sin for a Man to have two Wives?

Sir, Your speedy Answer will lay a great obligation upon one that Esteems and Admires you, more than he can find words to express.

X. X.

To this, the Society Answers.

1. What was once a Sin, will not always be so; Because that Sin cannot be committed now. It was a Sin in the People of *Israel* to look into the Ark of the Covenant, or to break any of the Judaical Ceremonies; whereas now they are all broke and Abolish'd, and the *Pharisees* which did after use them, were reproach'd

for it; and the Covenant is laid open now that all may see the Light on't, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

2. What was not a Sin once is one now.

'Twas no Sin for *Adam's* Sons, and their Sons and Daughters to intermarry; nay, They are requir'd not to Marry out of their own Tribe: but now 'tis against the Law, both Moral and Divine, to Marry a near Relation; Circumstances, Time, and Place alters things very much.

3. To mention only *David*, who was a Man after God's own Heart, and indeed 'twas accounted a Sin in him to Lie with *Uriah's* Wife; but I don't find him any where blam'd for having many of his own. Therefore

4. I think it was then the Custom of the Land so to doe, and as long as he was as a Husband should be to those Wives, neither he nor any one else sin'd then in having many, if the Laws of Man did not contradict it; but now by the Laws of Christianity 'tis deny'd. The Bishops are bid to be Husbands of one Wife and they were patterns in all things to the People, which Law is not repel'd, and therefore, did not our Human Law forbid it, 'tis sinful, we believe most Men find one enough.

Upon the whole, the Society are of the Opinion, That the Weight of the Question turns upon this, Whether Bigamy be a Sin; if the Querist means, whether it be *Malum in se*, whether is be a meer Crime in Fact, they answer, no: Because Sin, as directly Opposite to the Purity and Nature of God, can never be otherwise than Sin, and will be always so; such as *Pride*, *Envy*, *Malice*, &c.

But as Sin is Circumstantiated, those Accounts are sinful under one Government, which are not so under another; and such is this:

It is every Man's Duty to Obey, in every Lawful thing, the Laws of the Government he lives under, both as they are Reasonable, and as he consents in their making to be so Governed—On 'this Account Polygamy would be a Sin against God, if practis'd in *England*.

But to all such Gentlemen, who would be loose in this Case, tho' they know not what they ask, 'tis proper to observe; That the very Words of the Marriage-Contract make it impossible in *England* for a Man to Execute it twice, without making the second the Higheff Perjury, and Prevarication upon the First; and the

the Wisdom of our Reformers was very visible in it, Effectually to shut the Door, by the Civil Contract against that Vice, which might otherwise have crept in so, that let the Sin be what it will before, it cannot be done now without the Highest Sin against God, against the Government, against the Woman, and against our selves.

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